

**Central Falls School District  
Board of Trustees  
Minutes**

**April 11, 2006**

**I. Call to Order:**

**The Central Falls School District Board of Trustees Meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Chairperson, Mr. Robert Canavan.**

**Present were: Mr. Robert Canavan, Chairperson**

**Ms. Ana Cecilia Rosado**

**Ms. Ana-Cano Morales**

**Ms. Mary Lou Perez**

**Mr. Joel Roseman**

**Mr. Jhomphy Ventura**

**Mr. Angelo García**

**II. Public Comments:**

**Mr. Dick Currier, President of the Non-certified Union, read a note regarding Dr. Watkins not attending the negotiation meeting on April 10, 2006. He said that they are not being treated fairly. Dr. Watkins**

**explained that she was invited to present at a meeting at Brown University and that this meeting was scheduled six months ago.**

**Ms. Anna Cano-Morales said that sometimes the Superintendent is present and sometimes she is not. She does not have to attend all the meetings.**

**Attorney Piccirilli said that he and Bob Murray were present and apologized. He said that one of the problems is that the members of the Board of Trustees would be on the negotiation team and they have not been named as of yesterday. The Union did not have the names of the board members.**

**Connie Dube said that they could have been informed prior to the meeting.**

### **III. Approval of Minutes:**

**Ms. Mary Luo Pérez motioned to approve the minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Mr. Joel Roseman and unanimously approved by the Board.**

### **IV. Schedule of Bills:**

**Mr. Joel Roseman motioned to approve the schedule of bills. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ana Cano-Morales and unanimously approved by the Board.**

**Mr. Canavan welcomed the new board members and asked them to introduce themselves.**

**Mr. Jhomphy Ventura said that he was a resident of Providence for 16 years and recently moved to Central Falls where he grew up. Professor at RIC, he was the president of the Board of Directors of CHISPA and is here to do the best for the kids in the community.**

**Mr. Angelo García is a life long resident of the community. He is the Executive Director of Channel One.**

## **V. Communication:**

**No communications**

## **VI. Reports:**

### **A. Administration:**

**Dr. Watkins congratulated Cathy Carvalho, teacher at the middle school. Ms Carvalho started a tutorial program for students who are below grade level in reading. The program begins at 7:00 am.**

**Dr. Watkins introduced members of the Superintendent's Parent Advisory Council. Two parents from each school are represented on the board. Members present included:**

**Jackie Wilson – President of the PTO at Calcutt**

**Cherie Cruz- President of the PTO at Veterans**

**Alison, PTO representative of Captain Hunt**

**Vernia Carter, PTO at Captain Hunt**

**Debra Good, PTO at Veterans**

**Dr. Watkins thanked them for their involvement, their suggestions and support.**

**B. Chairperson:**

**Mr. Canavan thanked Representative Faria and Councilman Silva for serving on the board of trustees for the past 3 years. He also recognized Ms. Maureen Azar who was named by "Whose Who" for being an outstanding educator in America.**

**In his report, Mr. Canavan also mentioned that at the NRIC dinner he spoke with the Governor for about an hour. The Governor asked Mr. Canavan what he thought happened to Central Falls over the years.**

**Mr. Canavan also mentioned to the Governor that he did not want to**

be reappointed to the Board of Trustees of Central Falls after June 30, 2006. He answered all the questions the Governor asked. The Governor asked him if he had any suggestions regarding how to help kids in Central Falls. Mr. Canavan offered the Governor some suggestions.

**C. Other:**

Mr. Joel Roseman, mentioned that the Grievance Committee had received a longevity grievance but thinks it was already solved. Ms. Jane Sessums said that there are still some remaining issues that need to be addressed.

In response, Dr. Watkins mentioned that the auditors recommended changing the way longevity payments are being issued. Based on the auditor's recommendations, Dr. Watkins mentioned that we can no longer continue paying longevity the way we do (upfront). We have to pay longevity in the same fiscal year.

Mr. Bob Murray explained how longevity is paid and that 13 people have already been paid. Mr. Murray continued to inform the board that teachers have already been paid. However, administrators will be paid in the next pay period. .

Ms. Jane Sessums mentioned that she sent 3 or 4 e-mails to the administration and has not received any responses. .

**Mr. Joel Roseman thanked Christine Gingerella for inviting him to visit with students of her Drawing program. He also mentioned the great work these students are doing in creating a comic book about their feelings about attending high school next year. Mr. Roseman also expressed best wishes to the students who will be traveling to France.**

**Ms. Mary Lou Perez mentioned that Ana Cano-Morales and she interviewed someone for the 2 possible positions on the board that will be made available in June. They also will be sending letters to other possible candidates.**

**Mr. Canavan suggested that one of the persons has to be from Central Falls or had attended or had kids in Central Falls Schools.**

**Mr. Canavan mentioned to the board members that they need to vote on a Vice Chairperson of the board at the next meeting. This position became vacant when Mr. Faria, who was the Vice Chairperson, was not re-appointed. Mr. Canavan also mentioned that the Superintendent's evaluation has to wait until the new board members feel comfortable in evaluating her performance.**

## **VII. Personnel Matters:**

**A. Dr. Watkins recommended that the following appointments be made:**

**Sandra Weber                      Administrative Assistant Superintendent's  
Office, effective 3/16/06**

**Lucia Archilla                  Home School Liaison – Calcutt, effective 3/21/06**

**Paul Hetu                      4 Math teacher High School, effective 3/24/06**

**Jose Lopes                      Temporary custodian 2nd shift High School,  
effective 3/30/06**

**Joseph Handy                  Head Coach Girls' Basketball 2006-2007 season**

**Scott Bergeron                  Assistant Coach Girls' Basketball 2006-2007  
season**

**Jason Gagne                  Head Wrestling Coach 2006-2007 season**

**Brian Goodhart                  Assistant Wrestling Coach 2006-2007 season**

**Maurice Jackson                  Head Coach Football 2006-2007 season**

**Jeffrey Schanck                  Head Coach Girl's Indoor Track 2006-2007  
season**

**Erica Jackson                  Cheerleader Advisor, High School 2006-2007  
season**

**Mike Goodson                  Assistant Coach Boys Baseball 2005-2006  
season**

## **VIII. Approval of Appointments:**

**Mr. Joel Roseman motioned to approve. The motion was seconded by Ms. Mary Lou Pérez and unanimously approved by the Board.**

## **IX. New Business:**

**A. District Calendar for 2006-2007: Dr. Watkins thanked the members of the Teachers' Union (Audrey, Walter and Jane) for their contribution in helping to prepare the calendar.**

**Mr. Joel Roseman motioned to approve the calendar. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ana Cecilia Rosado and unanimously approved by the Board.**

**B. High School Update: Dr. Watkins informed the board that tardiness at the high school has decreased and that behavior issues and discipline issues have also decreased. Saturday detention has increased to 60-80 kids. Absenteeism is still high. However, the school is much orderly. Students are not walking through the hallways and entering their classrooms after the period begins, thus, interrupting instruction. Teachers now close their classroom door once the period begins and students are not allowed to enter. The district plans to continue this practice.**

**Ms. Ana Cecilia Rosado asked how many students are suspended.**



**Dr. Watkins responded that there are approximately 100 suspensions.**

**Ms. Mary Lou Perez mentioned that she too has seen some improvement. She went on to say that she does not notice many students walking to school after school has started.**

**Dr. Watkins mentioned that students appear to be getting the message. Dr. Watkins thanked Ann Mariano and the technology team that designed a system and procedure that is more efficient and faster at imputing students who are tardy into the system. Dr. Watkins also said that she spoke with Dr. Mary Canole and she was very pleased with the progress.**

**Dr. Watkins said that she invited Dr. Mary Canole to the meeting but she could not make it. Mr. Canavan replied why Dr. Canole was not advised earlier about the meeting. If she had known earlier, Mr. Canavan continued, she probably would have attended. Mr. Canavan also inquired why Dr. Flaherty was not invited.**

**C. 9th Grade Academy and Facility Update: Dr. Watkins thanked the 9th grade academy team for the design of the curriculum for the 9th grade academy. In addition, she thanked Mr. Angelo García and the facility committee for their engagement in looking for a building in and outside the district. The committee came up with four (4) recommendations regarding a building for the academy. It was also mentioned that it was very difficult to find a building in the district to accommodate the 9th graders. Buildings in the district are basically**

industrial mills and it would be more expensive to remodel than to build a new one. Locating the academy outside the city would not be a good investment. Dr. Watkins also mentioned that the recommendations being presented to the board was for their information and input. Dr. Watkins suggested to the board that it would be beneficial for the board to meet again to further discuss this topic before the end of April or beginning of May. Funding is a big issue and we do not receive funding when we go outside the city (for the building). The city does not have money to remodel a building.

Dr. Watkins explained the different options there are in order to accommodate the 9th graders. She also mentioned that we did not have to decide tonight and suggested a work session to discuss the topic.

Ms. Mary Lou Pérez asked if 9th grade students are going to have the same program they have in the High School if they move. Dr. Watkins explained that they would.

Ms. Mary Lou Pérez inquired about funding the academy. Mr. Bob Murray responded that we will have to lease the building and the money will come from the Operational General Fund.

Mr. Jhomphy Ventura asked how many students we were talking about and Dr. Watkins responded that there are approximately between 300 and 350 students.

**Mr. Joel Roseman asked Dr. Watkins what she wanted from the board. What she wanted the board to do.**

**Mr. García mentioned that he attended one meeting and that he thought that they need to look at what is going to happen next year and in the future. Mr. García continued to say that as a school district we need to look at the whole picture. The city is facing a difficult fiscal situation and if we need to buy a building we will need a person from RIDE involved.**

**Mr. Joel Roseman mentioned that if the facility committee favors one option over the other, then members of the board of trustees do not have to hold a separate meeting to discuss the options. He also inquired if there was Union representation at the facility committee meeting. Dr. Watkins said that we have to choose the facility before inviting the Union to the table, because we are not changing the contract. The only thing that we are changing is the building. Jane Sessums replied that they have not been invited and there could be a number of issues that need to be addressed. Mr. Joel Roseman mentioned that these issues should be resolved first before making a decision.**

**D. NECAP Results: Dr. Watkins mentioned that we did not do as well as expected. There are things that need to be changed in order for improvement to take place. We have to look at intervention more**

**seriously; Pacing Guides for higher results and quarterly benchmark assessment (analyze the data). The NECAP results are based on information students learned during the 2004-2005 school year.**

**Mr. Joel Roseman also mentioned that this is the first year of this kind of test. He suggested summarizing the results instead of reading charts. Dr. Watkins said that the information has to be disaggregated. Ms. Ana Cecilia Rosado said that she prefers the charts because she can interpret them herself.**

**Mr. Jhomphy Ventura asked how to interpret the chart and Dr. Watkins explained the graphics.**

**Mr. Canavan asked why the test scores are so much lower in Central Falls than in other cities. Dr. Watkins answered that the problem begins in the 2nd and 3rd grades. Children are not performing on the level they should be in these grades. Many of these students come from different countries and are functioning at different levels. She said that VICTORY IS IN THE CLASSROOM. We need to figure out how to break down the barriers to get there.**

**Mr. Joel Roseman said that the intervention program and the pacing guides are good tools.**

**Mr. Canavan said that test scores will not go up if we continue with a 5½ hour school day for only 180 days.**

**Mr. Joel Roseman said that children who come from other countries find school easier in this country because in their countries school operated 6 days a week and for longer hours.**

**Ms. Ana Cano-Morales said that teachers also find it easy.**

**Dr. Watkins mentioned that she remains optimistic about getting better.**

**E. Budget Review: Dr. Watkins mentioned that the budget is a working budget. Dr. Watkins spoke about the document distributed to the board. The increase is about 10%. Dr. Watkins informed that the budget contains items that are needed and appropriate.**

**Mr. Joel Roseman asked if this budget is compared to other urban school districts. Mr. Murray responded that is approximately the same. He said that a majority of the students, state wide, are enrolled in the urban core (Providence, Pawtucket, Woonsocket, Central Falls).**

**Mr. Canavan asked how the projection is determined. Dr. Watkins answered that it was done by grade and trend over 10 years. We went back to five years and projected. It would be higher if there were not Charter Schools.**

**Mr. Joel Roseman mentioned that he would like to see money go into**

hiring more teachers and go directly to students instead of hiring two people for finance, a bus driver, a secretary unless we are falling apart. Money should go to students. Dr. Watkins responded that things change on a daily basis. Ms. Joanne Vecchio mentioned that the finance department does play a direct roll in supporting students and teachers. It is, for example, the finance department that ensures that instructional and other materials are processed and ordered on a timely basis and that all payments are made on time. The budget and grants have increased 100 fold over the years and the number of people doing this work in the finance office remains the same. The finance department needs help if it is to provide the support and assistance schools need in order to operate. Finance has a direct impact on teachers and students. Mr. Joel Roseman mentioned that maybe the best solution would be to change the system.

Mr. Joel Roseman mentioned that there are 5 new teachers at the high school. Transportation cost needs to be addressed.

Attorney Piccirilli said that Special Education needs transportation and that usually puts a strain on the budget.

Mr. Canavan said that it would be cheaper to have workers work extra hours than to hire additional employees.

Dr. Watkins said that we put in the budget what we need and we know that we can not get everything.

**Dr. Watkins mentioned that we do not plan to fill the Human Resources position and that she would explain this in the executive session meeting.**

**Mr. Joel Roseman asked if Sandy Weber's position was the same as Sue Levasseur had. Dr. Watkins answered "yes" but with more things to do.**

**Mr. Joel Roseman and Mr. Canavan asked if some positions should be discussed in executive session.**

**Attorney Piccirilli explained how it is and also mentioned that the Human Resources Director's position could be discussed in public session.**

**Ms. Ana Cano-Morales suggested having another meeting to discuss the budget and the 9th grade academy.**

**F. Administrators' Benefit Policy: Dr. Watkins said that she promised the administrators that benefits would not change and she asked the board to support her.**

**Certified Administrators require a certification from RIDE.**

**Dr. Watkins suggested going with the same benefits teachers have. Mr. Canavan asked how much we were talking about. Mr. Bob Murray said that from his fiscal point of view we should reduce dollars.**

**Mr. Joel Roseman said that employees would get the benefits if they really retire from the school district. If they move to another school district they would get nothing.**

**Attorney Piccirilli said that the consequences would be that in 10 years a principal is going to say: “I will go back to being a teacher in order to get better benefits”.**

**Ana Cano-Morales motioned to approve. The motion was seconded by Angelo García. Ana Cecilia Rosado abstained from voting. So it was voted 6-0**

**G. Coaching Positions: Dr. Watkins read what it says in the contract for coaches’ positions: Coaches who are not members of the bargaining unit shall be given a one season contract and their position shall be re-posted annually.**

**Mr. Joel Roseman asked who changed it. Dr. Watkins answered that the Union requested the change in the contract, so Mr. Roseman stated that the minutes should say that the bargain union made the change.**



## **X. Executive Session:**

**At 8:55 p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Ana Cecilia Rosado to move to Executive Session. The motion was seconded by Ms. Mary Lou Pérez. A roll call vote was taken and so it was unanimously approved.**

**Mr. Canavan reconvened the public meeting at 9:37 p.m. The motion to reconvene the public meeting was made by Ana Cecilia Rosado seconded by Mr. Jhomphy Ventura. A roll call vote was taken so it was unanimously approved.**

**Dr. Watkins said that the PTO is requesting another meeting.**

**Mr. Felix Estrada, President of the PTO at the High School said that parents are more involved and students are doing much better. They are improving. About 100 parents are attending these meetings and they are requesting another meeting for the 3rd quarter.**

**Ms. Jane Sessums mentioned that the district plans those days and the Union has nothing to do with it.**

**Dr. Watkins said that she could see the possibilities of another meeting.**

**Mr. Angelo García said that it is important if 100 parents want to communicate with teachers. It is something that needs to be considered.**

#### **XI. Adjournment:**

**A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Ms. Mary Lou Pérez and seconded by Ms. Ana Cano-Morales. The meeting was adjourned at 9:42 p.m.**